



TO: Brian Gwyn, NCGA Staff Attorney and Legislative Analyst
CC: Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee Members
FROM: Nathan Currie, NCCA Superintendent
DATE: November 9, 2017

We appreciated the opportunity to present before the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on November 7. Please find below our responses to some of the questions that were posed during our presentation:

Discuss the levels of parent involvement compared to traditional schools? What types of participation in band, athletics or extracurricular activities? How much success is seen without having distractions of a traditional school?

North Carolina Connections Academy (NCCA) believes that a continued triangulated relationship is one of the pillars of its success. The parent, teacher, and student are the crucial components at NCCA. During the onboarding process parents, students and teachers enter into an agreement to confirm their commitment to work together. We believe that our high level of parent participation and engagement, along with our over 90% of parent satisfaction is what makes NCCA unique and attractive.

At the present time and under current law, LEAs are not required to allow our students to participate in their extra-curriculum organizations or clubs. However, NCCA has developed and launched over 12 clubs for our students to join and engage in. In addition, many students enrolled at our school already are involved with extracurricular activities such as semi-professional tennis, ballet, performing arts, and television in addition to club sports and activities.

(<http://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/education/article177448406.html>)

Over 90% of our teachers have reported that the virtual setting allows them to focus on what really matters the most which is teaching and learning. Teachers are not obligated to areas that provide little instructional merit such as recess, lunch, or bus duties. In addition, very minimum disciplinary distractions take place during instruction as both teachers and parents are working together within the classroom.

How are students performing at North Carolina Connections Academy that are part of the NC Juvenile Justice System?

Just one of the many benefits of the virtual setting is to allow students to continue with their schooling regardless of barriers such as family life, academic recovery, or legal restoration. At the present moment, we are serving 3 students within the state's juvenile system. These students were unsuccessful in their traditional brick-mortar setting and they were unable to attend the alternative school within the LEA due to discipline. All

three of these students are doing well--academically, behaviorally, and have perfect attendance.

Describe the field trip budget? What was done in the Rocky Mount area?

As noted, the school has completed over 40 field trips since it opened in August 2015. We strongly believe that social connection is a vital component of virtual schooling. These field trips are optional but families take full advantage of the social networking and learning experiences that they provide. The school strategically plans many trips that are free or with minimum cost to families. The strong support and commitment of our Learning Coaches and Club Orange members provide the necessary funding for these optional events. The actual school expenses are very minimum cost--only staff travel. Moreover, we strategically have field trips across the state so that students and families have the opportunity to interact with each other, and school staff, closer to their homes.

Hurricane Matthew devastated much of our great state in 2016. NCCA students and staff made a strong commitment to assist many communities during this time by offering school resources, basic necessities, and a listening ear. The following media outlet provided a spotlight on some of the work in the Nash/Rocky Mount area.

(<http://www.rockymounttelegram.com/Community/2017/02/19/Online-charter-school-aids-Boys-Girls-Clubs.html>)

Again, we do appreciate the time and interest of this committee and we look forward to future conversations regarding the continued commitment to virtual education in North Carolina.

Regards,

Nathan Currie
Superintendent